

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 JUSE-00 L-03 PA-02 ICA-20 SSO-00
SS-15 NSCE-00 A-01 PER-05 /061 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CAR:G DE SANTILLANA/KAR
APPROVED BY ARA/CAR:A HEWITT
ARA/PPC:J DIETERICH (SUBS)

-----022473 142330Z /62

O 142254Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, APER, DR, US

SUBJECT: APRIL 14, 1978 NOON BRIEFING: AMBASSADOR
HURWITCH'S RESIGNATION

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT
OF AN EXCHANGE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE DEPARTMENT'S
APRIL 14 NOON BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY A CORRECTED TRANS-
SCRIPT WILL FOLLOW.

2. QUOTE

I HAVE A FURTHER STATEMENT TO MAKE.

A PRESS REPORT HAS APPEARED CONCERNING A DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATION INVOLVING AMBASSADOR ROBERT HURWITCH, WHO
RECENTLY RESIGNED AS AMBASSADOR TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.
AMBASSADOR HURWITCH LEFT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ON
APRIL 5 AND RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

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THERE IS A STATUTE, 28 U.S. CODE SECTION 535, THAT REQUIRES
ANY ALLEGATION OF WRONGDOING BY A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE TO
BE REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. UNDER THAT
PROVISION, A DECISION WAS MADE ON APRIL 3RD TO REFER THE
MATTER TO JUSTICE, AND IT WAS SO REFERRED ON APRIL 13TH.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY WITH

REGARD TO THE INVESTIGATION.

LAST NOVEMBER, SOME MONTHS PRECEDING THE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATION, AMBASSADOR HURWITCH INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT THAT HE PLANNED TO RETIRE FROM THE FOREIGN SERVICE DURING THIS CURRENT YEAR. AMBASSADOR HURWITCH IS NOW CARRYING OUT HIS PLANS TO RETIRE IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE HE HAS HIS HOME.

DO I HAVE QUESTIONS ON THAT STATEMENT?

Q - IS THAT STATEMENT AVAILABLE IN WRITTEN FORM, TOM, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE?

A - I THINK WE CAN MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO YOU AFTERWARDS. YES, WE CAN XEROX SUBSEQUENT COPIES OF IT, IF YOU WOULD LIKE IT.

Q - PLEASE.

A - DO I HAVE QUESTIONS ON THE STATEMENT?

Q - YES. THE FACT THAT YOU DID REFER THIS CASE TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS LAW -- DOES IT MEAN THAT THERE IS SOMETHING TO THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT WHAT MR. HURWITCH MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE DONE?
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A - NO. I THINK AS I STATED IN THE STATEMENT, THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW -- THE REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. SECTION 535 -- ARE BEING REQUIRED, AND THAT SECTION OF THE STATUTE SAYS THAT WHENEVER THERE IS AN ALLEGATION OF WRONGDOING THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

NOW, I'M AFRAID I DON'T HAVE A COPY OF THE STATUTE IN FRONT OF ME, BUT I THINK THAT ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AND, THEREFORE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS REFERRED THE MATTER TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO SEE WHAT THEIR JUDGMENT IS AS TO THE APPROPRIATE DISPOSITION OF THE MATTER.

Q - WHERE DID THE ALLEGATION ORIGINATE, HERE OR IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

A - I DON'T KNOW.

Q - YOU SAID HE PLANNED TO RETIRE THIS CURRENT YEAR.

A - YES.

Q - COULD YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHEN HE PLANNED TO RETIRE?

A - I BELIEVE HE TOLD US LAST NOVEMBER THAT HE PLANNED TO RETIRE THIS YEAR; AND NOW THAT HIS SERVICE AT POST IN SANTO DOMINGO IS UP, I WOULD ASSUME THAT IT WOULD BE FAIRLY SHORTLY. I'M NOT SURE.

Q - I MEAN COULD YOU SAY THAT HE INTENDED TO STICK IT OUT UNTIL AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS THERE THIS YEAR?

A - I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.

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Q - DID I HEAR YOU CORRECTLY? YOU SAID THAT ON APRIL 3RD A DECISION WAS MADE TO REFER THE MATTER TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, BUT THIS WASN'T DONE UNTIL APRIL 13.

A - THAT IS CORRECT.

Q - IS THERE ANY REASON WHY YOU WAITED TEN DAYS?

A - I'M NOT SURE THERE'S MUCH TO IT. SOMETIMES WE ESSENTIALLY MAKE A DECISION, BUT THEN CERTAIN PAPERS HAVE TO BE PASSED AROUND FOR FORMAL CLEARANCES ON THINGS; AND I THINK THAT IS WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THIS CASE.

Q - WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOU WOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING FURTHER, I GATHER YOU WON'T COMMENT ON THE CHARGES BEING MADE ABOUT MR. HURWITCH -- THE ALLEGATIONS IN THAT NEWS REPORT TODAY.

A - WELL, LET ME SAY THAT TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER WE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WOULD EXPECT TO SEEK RESTITUTION FOR ANY POSSIBLE MISUSE OF EMBASSY FUNDS, SERVICES OR PROPERTY, LET ME SAY, IF THERE WAS ANY MISUSE WE ASSUME THAT AMBASSADOR HURWITCH WILL REIMBURSE THE GOVERNMENT.

Q - TOM, ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND FROM THE WAY THIS IS PHRASED THAT A DEPARTMENTAL INVESTIGATION HAD GONE ON INTO THE ALLEGATIONS BEFORE YOU REFERRED THIS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE?

A - YES.

Q - HOW LONG HAD THAT BEEN UNDERWAY?

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A - I AM NOT SURE OF THE EXACT TIME-FRAME. LET ME SEE,
WE ARE NOW IN APRIL -- I THINK A COUPLE OF MONTHS, BUT
THAT IS A BALL PARK FIGURE.

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS MATTER?

Q - YES. CAN YOU TELL US HOW INVESTIGATIONS LIKE THIS
ARE HANDLED? ARE THEY HANDLED THROUGH THE INSPECTOR
GENERAL'S OFFICE?

A - YES, I BELIEVE SO.

Q - ON THE SCENE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

A - I BELIEVE THAT THERE WERE INVESTIGATORS IN THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

Q - IN OTHER WORDS, SOMEBODY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WENT TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO LOOK INTO THESE CHARGES?

A - I BELIEVE THAT IS CORRECT. NOW BEFORE WE LEAVE THE
SUBJECT, CHARLES, DO YOU THINK WE COULD MAKE SOME XEROX
COPIES OF THE STATEMENT?

Q - THAT WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

A - THANK YOU, CHARLES.

UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, AMBASSADORS, INVESTIGATIONS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE096691
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: G DE SANTILLANA/KAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0785
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780454/aaaabtln.tel
Line Count: 204
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bc9001b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2959926
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: APRIL 14, 1978 NOON BRIEFING: AMBASSADOR HURWITCH'S RESIGNATION
TAGS: PDIP, APER, SOPN, DR, US, (HURWITCH, ROBERT)
To: SANTO DOMINGO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bc9001b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014